



Success Stories



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“Fish Tales” Connects Kids with Nature

Throughout the 2002 summer, the Shawnee National Forest continued its environmental education program for youth called "Fish Tales." The program aims to reconnect area youth with their natural resources through a series of hands-on learning experiences on the Shawnee NF.

The schools that participated in Fish Tales this summer were Cairo, Century, Cypress, Dongola, Egyptian, Meridian and Vienna. Children learned environmental conservation through activities that included fishing, interactive conservation programs, arts and crafts.

The Shawnee NF worked partnered in developing Fish Tales with the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge (USDI Fish & Wildlife Service), Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, and the Shawnee Community College. Thanks to twelve contributors, both organizations and individuals, a number of goods and services were provided free of charge. These included Head Start, Friends of the Cache, the Illinois Coalition of Community Services, and 4-H.

Recruitment of students was coordinated with the seven schools serving children ages 7-12 in Alexander, Polaski and Union counties. Shawnee NF employees visited the schools and made presentations to the children. Appearances by the clown fisherman Fannie Finn were highly effective in gaining valuable attention for the program.

Fish Tales has three objectives: (1) to provide a recreational opportunity to underserved children by teaching them how to fish, (2) to use fishing as a springboard to teach the children other conservation education concepts and (3) to provide the children a positive experience and memories to carry with them throughout their lives. In 2001 the program was provided through four three-day fishing camps.

In 2002, the previous year's program was expanded from four to six camps and from five to seven schools, with each session lasting two days. Activities, such as story telling, a pond study called "Water Canaries," the web of life and a water pollution exercise with the campers, along with arts and crafts classes, were used to enhance the outdoor recreation experience. These activities reinforced the water stewardship message.

The end of each camp was celebrated with an awards ceremony. Parents were invited to attend and awards were given to the children for their accomplishments. The camps were staffed by Shawnee NF and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge employees, as well as volunteers and persons hired through the Senior Citizen Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The Shawnee NF was very pleased to have numerous parents, grandparents, school officials, and other dignitaries attend the awards ceremonies.

At the conclusion of the six camps scheduled for this summer, the children who attended all left with smiles on their faces, stories to tell and memories sure to last a lifetime.



Participants in the "Fish Tales" program show off their catch on the Shawnee NF.

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—submitted by Shawnee NF



Ottawa Hosts 2002 Rainbow Gathering

The 2002 National Rainbow Family Gathering, which took place on the Watersmeet Ranger District of the Ottawa National Forest, peaked on July 4, 2002. Approximately 7,500 Rainbow Family members met on the old Choate townsite, which was closed under special order to protect sensitive resources and archeological sites.

Failure of the Rainbow Family to acquire a free, non-commercial group use permit rendered this event illegal. Although an application was received by the Forest Service for a permit as required by regulation, the requested site was unacceptable because of resource issues. An alternate site was offered by the Forest Service, but was not accepted by the Rainbow Family.

A National Incident Management Team (NIMT), with assistance from Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers and local Forest Service employees, was responsible for managing this event. A Unified Command approach for operations was implemented, with over 50 partners representing four State agencies, three Tribal agencies, seven county agencies, 14 local agencies, and local emergency services assisting the NIMT. Efforts of the Team focused on public safety and health and protection of natural resources.

According to Richard Glodowski, the special agent in charge for Region 9's Law Enforcement and Investigations, there were 2,208 documented law enforcement incidents during the gathering. The most common violations were traffic (650), illegal occupancy and use (384), public nudity (291) and natural resource damage (273).

Glodowski said that, although the gathering on the Ottawa NF was approximately two-thirds the expected size, "the documented law enforcement actions were at the same level primarily because of a more assertive stance in enforcing the closure orders."

He said the gathering gave law enforcement agencies valuable experience in working together to enforce the established regulations.

"One of the primary benefits of this was in building the working relationships between local communities and state and local governments," Glodowski said. "We were able to strengthen these partnerships, which will be helpful when we work together in the future."

Overall, efforts in the management of this event were very successful for the Forest Service. Through increased communications with Rainbow Family members regarding site selection, we were able to raise awareness about protection of natural resources and the importance of selecting a suitable site for an event of this magnitude. While many of the Rainbow Family members chose to stay in a closed area, a great many of the Family members realized the impacts they would have to the land and decided not to attend the Gathering or camped elsewhere.

Closures to sensitive areas in and around the illegal Gathering helped to reduce resource damage. Forest Service personnel have already been visiting the site to determine actual damage sustained and will begin restoration activities. Due to increased law enforcement efforts in the area, potential criminal activities were prevented and public safety preserved. Because of the limited number of Rainbow Family members, a significant number of emergency services calls were avoided completely, and 5 ambulance runs to the site were necessary and 6 other off-site ambulance runs were made.

The Forest Service remains committed to protecting our natural resources while providing a wide range of activities and services to the public. Our ability to manage large events such as the Rainbow Family Gathering allow us to manage the resources in a responsible and safe manner for all members of the public to enjoy.



Mounted patrols were an effective tool in helping to enforce order during the Rainbow Family gathering on the Ottawa NF.

—submitted by Lisa Klaus



Land Purchase Protects Cave System

There are few cave and karst systems as extensive as that which underlays part of the Hoosier National Forest. The system is complete with a river that disappears and reappears. This river, known as the Lost River, is underground for approximately 23 miles of its length, though even in the underground section, there are places part of the river's water boils to the surface, then subsides back underground.

On August 17, 2002, working closely with the Hoosier NF, the Nature Conservancy closed on a 213-acre acquisition that will protect this cave system. The Nature Conservancy will hold the property in the hopes that the Forest Service will be able to reimburse them and take possession of the tract in the future.

The new tract lies adjacent to the Forest Service's Wesley Chapel Gulf—a National Natural Landmark noted for its rare geologic features. The gulf is a 12-acre depression which provides a rare glimpse of the Lost River on its underground journey.

The cave system associated with Lost River is known to harbor at least 24 cave species, three of which are new to science. One is a fish which is thought to have a life span of 100 years. Julian Lewis, a cave system researcher, said the area of the new acquisition is a "biological hot spot."

It is documented as the third largest subterranean system in the state, but is thought, once the complete system is mapped, that it may be the state's largest. The Nature Conservancy considers it to be of global significance. Steve Grubbs, land protection specialist at the Nature Conservancy, said only one other underground river system, located in Vietnam, is similar to the Lost River system.

The cave system under the property is thought to be dynamic and dangerous. A nearby rise where the river comes back to the surface, is known to be 160 foot deep, and the area is fraught with underground vertical shafts and twisting channels. The underground channels are also fragile and are threatened by many new homes and septic systems in the area.

The Indiana Karst Conservancy was also a key player in helping the Nature Conservancy secure the property. They helped make the property's previous owner, Orange County Circuit Court Judge Larry Blanton and his sister, aware of the cave's significance. Their information swayed the Blantons in the disposition of their property.



This "enchanted forest" lies beneath the newly acquired tract and is part of the subsurface channel for the Lost River beneath the Hoosier.

—submitted by Teena Ligman



Interns Reach Out Thru Americas Outdoors

What does a spider-relay race, a prairie planting and the building of a butterfly garden in the inner city have to do with the Forest Service? They are all part of the exciting programs put on this summer by the 2002 Conservation Education Intern team working out of the America's Outdoors Center.

The summer intern program aims to connect with urban youth in their own environment to help them gain a better understanding of the natural world and their role in it through the use of games, interactive displays, group discussions, and hands-on learning. The program introduces youth to the concepts of natural resource management, biological diversity, sustainability, conservation and stewardship through site visits throughout Milwaukee's urban areas.

"I strongly believe in the value of the Conservation Education Intern Program," said Jean Claassen, a member of the Eastern Regional Office Public Affairs team assigned to America's Outdoors who supervised the summer interns.

"In order to help urban children understand the interconnectedness of all living things and see their role in nature, it is important to reach them first in their own environment," she said. "They can then better understand the value of all lands, how natural areas are important sources of clean air and water, and habitat for plants and animals."

The interns stuck to a fast-paced schedule, with daily visits to sites throughout the greater Milwaukee area. There were activities at the Urban Tree House site at Lynden Hill, YMCA camps, Summerfest, Chicago Stewardship Days, Indian Community School, Neighborhood House, and Boy and Girl Scout Camps.

Repeat visits to each site helped the interns develop a relationship with the nearly 2,000 children they contacted, and allowed them to reinforce the conservation messages.

Rainbow Wulfeck, a recent graduate of Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, was one of the four interns. She worked for the California State Department of Forestry before earning her degree in environmental education.

"This was my first time working in an urban area, and it has been an enlightening experience," Wulfeck said. "We had the chance to show urban kids that nature is a big part of expressing ourselves. It has been a very rewarding experience."

The summer program benefited the interns in different ways.

For Ryan Rysewyk, the intern program complimented his social work studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Fellow intern Heidi Hancock, a UW-Eau Claire sophomore, gained valuable insight into her major of elementary education.

"It was really neat seeing inner city kids getting excited about nature," Hancock said. "Most of the kids we've worked with are elementary school age. I have gotten quite a bit of experience developing lesson plans."

The fourth intern, Carolyn Seramur, is a senior at UW-Stevens Point where she is majoring in environmental education. She said her future plans may include working in the Forest Service.

"I was looking for an opportunity to work in an urban setting, and the chance to work with a variety of different people," Seramur explained. "I definitely learned a lot more about the Forest Service and what all goes on in the organization."

The Milwaukee team was one of five Conservation Education teams working throughout the eastern U.S. this summer. The other four teams worked in Atlanta; Asheville, NC; Huntsville, AL; and Newark, NJ.



Summer intern Heidi Hancock (left) helps kids at the Weir Center plant a garden.

—submitted by R9 RO Public Affairs Office



Rare Plant Removed From Endangered List

Employees of the White Mountain National Forest and the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service—along with partners from the Appalachian Mountain Club and New England Wild Flower Society—joined together August 28, 2002, to celebrate the delisting of *Potentilla robbinsiana* (Robbins' cinquefoil) from the Endangered Species list.

The event was held at the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, NH, in a room overlooking the mountains where the cinquefoil once thrived, came close to total extinction, and now thrives again.

For those unfamiliar with this plant, it is a member of the rose family, and occurs only in the alpine zone of the White Mountain NF. It is a small, almost stemless perennial that measures between two and four centimeters in diameter and bears a yellow flower. Flowering generally begins in early June and lasts approximately three weeks. Prior to receiving Endangered Species Act protection in 1980, the known main population of Robbins' cinquefoil numbered only 3,700 plants. Today, thanks to the efforts of government agencies and their partners, the population totals more than 14,000 plants!

"The successful, dramatic recovery of Robbins' cinquefoil is an example of the power of federal and private partnerships to benefit imperiled plants, fish and wildlife," said Dr. Marnie Parker, regional director of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Northeast, said at the event. "The White Mountain National Forest is committed to protecting this small plant's habitat, the Appalachian Mountain Club is committed to managing habitat and monitoring the population, and the New England Wild Flower Society is committed to successfully propagating plants for reintroduction. All were vital to Robbins' cinquefoil recovery."

Potentilla robbinsiana was listed in 1980 because of threats caused by hikers and due to the significant decline in the remaining populations. Through trail relocation, construction of scree walls to protect the habitat, transplanting adult plants raised in greenhouses, and annual monitoring, the population reached the goals identified in the Recovery Plan.

The speakers at the celebration all recognized the significant partnership efforts by FWS, AMC, the New England Wild Flower Society, and the WMNF that contributed to this, only the second plant ever to be successfully removed from the list.

There were many people, including current and former employees, that worked hard to make this happen, from the biologists and biotechs helping with the transplanting and monitoring effort, to the recreation staff who relocated trails, built scree walls, and assisted with educating the visiting public. This extraordinary national accomplishment is a great example of how collaboration between partners and agencies works to make a difference in our environment. Thanks to everyone who's been a part of this project over the years!



The Robbins' Cinquefoil was delisted thanks to efforts by the White Mountain NF and its partners.

—submitted by Colleen Mainville



Gate Constructed at Wayne Bat Cave

Three gates have been constructed across the entrances to abandoned underground mines on the Ironton Ranger District of the Wayne National Forest. Netting of the mine entrances during summer and fall over the past several years, and limited internal exploration of the mines, revealed that many different species of bats use all three mines throughout the year.

Increasingly, people are discovering and entering the mines since an illegal off-road vehicle trail passes within 100 feet of an entrance. Gates were installed to protect the public from injury and reduce disturbance to roosting and hibernating bats.

The project was a cooperative venture between the Wayne NF, the Ohio Division of Wildlife and USDI Fish and Wildlife Service. Pending additional funding, more area mines may be gated in the future.

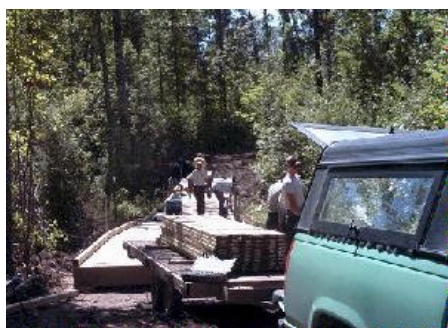
The gates were constructed primarily from angle iron, using a design which resists vandalism but allows unimpeded access by bats and maintains natural air flow. The only ground disturbance was a few holes drilled in rock at the mine entrances to anchor the gates. The work was accomplished during the summer to minimize impacts on hibernating or swarming bats.



Wayne National Forest employees install angle iron gates at mine entrances where numerous species of bats roost and hibernate.

—submitted by *Teena Ligman*

Bridge Built for Chippewa's Mi-Ge-Zi Trail



Chippewa NF employees build a bridge on the Mi-Ge-Zi trail this summer.

The Mi-Ge-Zi (which means "bald eagle" in Ojibwe) trail winds through the forests and lakes, blending into the landscape, bringing people closer to history and the outstanding scenery on the Chippewa National Forest. When it is completed, the Mi-Ge-Zi trail will be an 18-mile bike trail segment connecting to northern Minnesota's popular network of bike trails.

A six-mile portion of the trail looping around Pike Bay on Cass Lake is currently under construction. The cost of this phase of the project is estimated at approximately \$450,000 and, when complete, will provide an eight-foot paved travel surface for bicyclists to enjoy.

The Chippewa NF engineering survey crew recently took time out of their busy survey schedule to construct a new 9'x 108' bridge for the trail. The trail bridge provides access across a small seasonal drainage with minimal impacts to the environment.

Curt Geiger, Gary Brama, and Jim Schoonover--with the assistance of Danny Dennis, Drew Wilson and a fire seasonal crew--built the entire bridge on site in 4½ days at significant savings to the government over a contracted price.

—submitted by *Melissa Rickers*



Butterfly Meadows Bloom on the Chippewa

In May of 1992, the wildlife staff at the Marcell Ranger Station on the Chippewa National Forest started their first planting of Butterfly Meadows. Using already established permanent openings, nearly twenty meadows have now been seeded to promote the growth of a variety of native wildflower species. The result is a beautiful meadow of flowers attractive to butterflies, bees and moths.

The meadows are also attractive to visitors. Daily visitors enjoy the small sample meadow established beside the Ranger Station. Another favorite site is easily accessible for viewing as an extension of the Chippewa Adventure Auto tour.

Jeremy Cable, district wildlife biologist, has been helping students from the "North School Garden Club" at North Elementary school in Spring Lake, Minnesota, establish a Butterfly Meadow of their own. On a field trip with Jeremy, the students netted butterflies and other insects and recorded their findings. They were able to see first-hand the benefits to wildlife that a wildflower planting can bring.



Ten years after reintroducing butterfly meadows on the Chippewa NF, nearly 20 meadows are attracting visitors.

—submitted by *Melissa Rickers*

Accessible Canoe Launch Opened on Allegheny



Skip Cussins, Ray Martz, Basil Huffman, Steve Farrell, and Norm Wimer gather at the Canoe launch site following its dedication.

The Barnett Township Supervisors and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) hosted a canoe trip May 29, 2002, to commemorate the completion of a handicapped-accessible canoe launch on the Clarion River in Barnett Township.

This five-year project, utilized the help of many partners and volunteers including the PA DCNR, Penn Soil Resource Conservation and Development Council, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service-Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania

Department of Transportation and many local volunteers.

This launch provides additional access to the nationally designated Wild & Scenic River Clarion River, and is one of the few accessible canoe launches on the Clarion.

—submitted by *Janeal Hedman*



History Camp Brings Past to Life

Did you know that York, William Clark's slave, and the rest of the Corps of Discovery traveled around southern Illinois during the fall of 1803? Did you know that local folklore tells of how Shawnee Chief Tecumseh stamped his foot in 1811 and caused the New Madrid Earthquake to occur? Would you like to learn about the Cherokee Trail of Tears and our nation's first civil rights movement called the Underground Railroad?

The summer youth recreation program of the Southern Illinois University Recreation Center worked with archaeologists and historians from the Shawnee National Forest to bring history alive for campers this summer. Campers had the opportunity to participate in an archaeological dig on an antebellum freed slave community located on the Shawnee NF.

They recovered many artifacts that had been discarded by the site's former occupants, Bedford and Abigail Miller. Bedford came to the area known as Miller Grove in the mid-1840s with his parents Harrison and Lucinda Miller. They traveled from south central (Marshall County) Tennessee after Andrew Miller and his sister freed them. He married Abigail during the 1860s and it is thought that together they built the site we have called "Abby's Place" after the Civil War.

Campers have also had the opportunity to learn about the Underground Railroad that passed through southern Illinois. Freed slave communities like Miller Grove were often used as hiding places on the Underground Railroad. They were so common, in fact, that communities like Miller Grove were as part of the escape of Eliza in Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Campers heard about missionary abolitionists that lived and worked in the Miller Grove area, ostensibly selling Bibles and other religious tracts. All campers had the opportunity to hike to either Sand Cave or Crow Knob and in doing so, learned how erosion causes the formation of bluffs and rock shelters in the Shawnee Hills. They also learned the Forest Service's "Leave No Trace" environmental stewardship ethic while hiking and horseback riding.

Early in the summer, campers had the opportunity to paddle a 36-foot long Montreal canoe. This is the same kind of vessel used by French voyageurs. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these canoes were used on most of the inland waterways. The Algonquin-style birch bark canoe in regular use during that time would transport more than three tons of goods and people as far as 50 miles each day. The campers signed a contract with Jean Baptiste LaMontagne, an agent of the Compagnie de Indies, that obligated them to work for the fur trading company for three years for the sum of 350 livres per year, along with two blankets, two shirts, a tump line and a pair of heavy duty boot moccasins. These are the same kind of canoes that were used by Lewis and Clark as they traveled up the Missouri River to winter at Fort Mandan.

A final tally of participation of underserved communities in the Environmental History Camp has not been completed. However, 144 4-H campers from the area of southern Illinois included in former President Clinton's Mississippi Delta Commission and approximately 206 campers from Southern Illinois University's Multi-Sport and Nature Adventure Camps have had the opportunity to learn important historical lessons relating to southern Illinois through this program. These included the Underground Railroad and the African American cultural heritage of the area, Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, French-Canadian voyageurs, and other significant episodes of history that occurred in and around the land that has since become the Shawnee National Forest.



Camp participants learned about the rich history of southern Illinois.

—submitted by Shawnee NF

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